

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 040694

E.O. 11652:XGDS

TAGS: OEXC, OVIP, NO

SUBJECT: STEEN DISCUSSIONS IN EUR
CINCLANT FOR ADM KIDD AND POLAD
1. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY VINE RECEIVED NORWEGIAN
LABOR PARTY AND PARLIAMENTARY FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
CHAIRMAN REIULF STEEN FOR CORDIAL 45-MINUTE DISCUSSION OF
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ISSUES OF MUTUAL INTEREST. CONVERSATION FOCUSED ON NOR-
WEGIAN PROBLEMS IN THE NORTHERN REGION AND TOUCHED ON
ECONOMIC SITUATION AS WELL AS DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE IN
NORWAY. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS OF FEBRUARY 14 MEETING.

2. FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES AND THE NORTHERN REGION: STEEN
APPEARED CONCERNED OVER THE RANGE OF SERIOUS ISSUES CON-

FRONTING NORWAY IN THE NORTH PARTICULARLY IN THE BARENTS SEA AND SAID HE FELT ALL OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES IN PARLIAMENT WILL VOTE AGAINST THE INTERIM GRAY-ZONE AGREEMENT WITH THE SOVIET UNION. VINE OBSERVED THAT THE UNITED STATES HELD REGULAR BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF NORWAY ON NORTHERN PROBLEMS AND THAT WE GREATLY VALUED THIS CANDID EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THE MANY STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL POLICY ASPECTS. VINE WONDERED WHETHER SOVIET POLICY WAS CONCERNED EXCLUSIVELY WITH FISH OR BOUNDARIES AND SAID HE THOUGHT NORWAY WOULD FACE MORE PROBLEMS WHEN THE INTERIM AGREEMENT

EXPIRED. HE NOTED THAT THE SOVIET UNION OPPOSED NORWAY'S NON-DISCRIMINATORY FISHERY PROTECTION ZONE (FPZ) AROUND SVALBARD ACROSS-THE-BOARD AND THAT THE PATTERN OF SOVIET BEHAVIOR IN THE REGION COULD ACHIEVE FOR THE USSR A BILATERAL, DE FACTO CONDOMINIUM. THIS WAS A SOURCE OF MAJOR CONCERN TO US POLICY MAKERS, VINE SAID, ADDING THAT WE HOPED NORWAY WOULD NEGOTIATE FROM STRENGTH WITH ALLIED SUPPORT.

3. WITH RESPECT TO THE FPZ, VINE SAID IT WAS UNDESIRABLE TO GIVE THE SOVIET UNION THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY CAN NEGOTIATE BILATERALLY WITH NORWAY ON SOMETHING OF INTEREST TO THE USSR WHERE NORWEGIAN SOVEREIGNTY AND THE RIGHTS OF OTHER SIGNATORIES ARE DIRECTLY INVOLVED. CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS WAS A POINT WE INTENDED TO MAKE LATER THIS WEEK IN WASHINGTON TO MR. EVENSEN WHO APPEARS ANXIOUS TO SPEED UP SOVIET-NORWEGIAN NEGOTIATIONS AT A TIME WHEN THE UNITED STATES WONDERS IF PATIENCE WERE NOT THE GREATER VIRTUE.

4. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION FROM MR. STEEN ON THE BARENTS SEA FISHING AGREEMENT, DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY VINE REPLIED THAT SOVIET TACTICS ARE RELATED TO THEIR LARGER STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL CONCERNS. VINE SUGGESTED THAT THE PUBLIC RELATIONS AND TIMING ASPECTS OF NORWAY'S RECENT DECISION TO RESTRICT THE PARTICIPATION OF FRG TROOPS IN NATO EXERCISES ON NORWEGIAN TERRITORY GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT NORWAY ACCEDED TO SOVIET PRESSURE.

5. AT THIS POINT MR. STEEN SPOKE OF HIS EXTREMELY USEFUL AND INFORMATIVE VISIT TO CINCLANT/NORFOLK FEBRUARY 13. STEEN SAID THAT ADMIRAL KIDD'S BRIEFINGS GAVE HIM A NEW INSIGHT INTO THE THREAT POSED BY THE SOVIET UNION AND THE PROBLEMS CONFRONTING THE ALLIANCE IN RESPONDING TO THAT THREAT. STEEN NOTED THAT GREAT ATTENTION WAS NOT PAID TO MILITARY ISSUES IN THE OFFICIAL DEBATES IN NORWAY BUT THAT

ALL NORWEGIANS WERE ALERT TO THE MILITARY CONCENTRATIONS ON THE KOLA PENINSULA AND THE ENORMOUS STRIDES MADE IN THE GROWING SOVIET NAVAL ARM. IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT ANY ATTEMPT BY THE SOVIET UNION TO USE THESE MILITARY FORCES WOULD AUTOMATICALLY INVOLVE NORWAY AND MOST LIKELY THE OTHER NORDIC NATIONS.

6. RETURNING TO THE BARENTS SEA NEGOTIATIONS, VINE STRESSED THAT THESE WERE BILATERAL MATTERS AND THE UNITED STATES WOULD NEVER COMMENT PUBLICLY ON SUCH NEGOTIATIONS WHICH DID NOT DIRECTLY INVOLVE THE UNITED STATES. HE REITERATED OUR CONCERNS THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD PURSUE THEIR SO-CALLED PACKAGE DEAL OR CONDOMINIUM APPROACH

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SEEKING TO RESOLVE ALL SOVIET-NORWEGIAN PROBLEMS IN ONE SINGLE FORUM WITH A DECISIVE VOICE ON ALL ISSUES. WHEN STEEN POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS A CONFLICT OF INTEREST WITHIN NORWAY BETWEEN THE NEEDS OF THE FISHERMEN AND STRATEGIC BROADER-GAUGED FOREIGN POLICY CONCERNS, HE WAS ADVISED THAT, IN THE USSR, WE THOUGHT THE INTERESTS OF THE FISHERY AND DEFENSE MINISTRIES COINCIDED. STEEN COMMENTED THAT THE INTERIM GRAY-ZONE AGREEMENT HELPS NORWAY TO BE PATIENT IN "OTHER" NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT INTERNAL PRESSURE FROM THE FISHERY LOBBY. VINE POINTED OUT THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE NOT ACCEPTED ONE NORWEGIAN POSITION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT THE UNITED STATES SAW LITTLE ADVANTAGE FOR NORWAY IN THE GRAY-ZONE ACCORD. HE ADDED THAT THE AGREEMENT GAVE THE SOVIET UNION JURISDICTION WELL BEYOND THE SECTOR LINE AND INTO WATERS THAT WOULD NORMALLY BE CONSIDERED NORWEGIAN.

7. NORWEGIAN POLITICS: STEEN CHARACTERIZED THE NORWEGIAN . POLITICAL SCENE AS HAVING RETURNED TO NORMAL IN 1977 WITH SUBSTANTIAL INCREASES IN VOTER SUPPORT FOR BOTH LABOR AND CONSERVATIVE PARTIES AS WELL AS DEMISE OF EXTREMIST GROUPS AT BOTH ENDS OF POLITICAL SPECTRUM. STEEN SAID HE CONSIDERED LABOR'S POSITION IN PARLIAMENT WEAKENED FOLLOWING 1977 ELECTIONS, A FACTOR HE ATTRIBUTES TO THE UTTERLY IRRESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR OF THE TWO REMAINING PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SOCIALIST LEFT PARTY. IT WAS EASIER TO HANDLE 16 FAR LEFTISTS, ACCORDING TO MR. STEEN, WHO DECLARED THAT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANY FORMAL AGREEMENT ON COOPERATION BETWEEN LABOR AND THE FAR LEFT. STEEN INDICATED THAT THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT WOULD SEEK SUPPORT FROM VARIOUS SEGMENTS IN PARLIAMENT ON AN ISSUE-BY-ISSUE BASIS.

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8. ECONOMIC SITUATION: MR. STEEN OBSERVED THAT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WERE DOMINATING THE CURRENT NORWEGIAN SCENE AND HE BLAMED THESE WOES ON AN EXCESSIVELY RAPID INCREASE IN THE STANDARD OF LIVING, A LARGE TRADE DEFICIT, AND HIGH-PRICED EXPORTS. HE NOTED THAT NORWAY'S 8 DEVALUATION SHOULD HELP THE COMPETITIVENESS OF NORWEGIAN EXPORTS AND EASE THE TRADE IMBALANCE.

9. VINE CONCLUDED BY REASSURING STEEN THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS ANXIOUS TO SUPPORT NORWAY IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE AND THAT WAS THE MAJOR THOUGHT WE HOPED HE WOULD REMEMBER FROM THE DISCUSSION VANCE

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